

FATHER ANTON'S WORDS OF WISDOM:



Today's readings ring loud and clear, especially in a world of uncertainty, such as the one we live in. Paul is reminding the people of Corinth that they are both God's field for harvesting, and His building. In other words, from our lives and our living out the Gospel of Jesus, God can harvest even from us in abundance. Our bodies are his home – they are his dwelling place and are to be revered. So, what does this mean? I don't think in this case it is all that difficult to understand. First, as Christians, we are called to follow Jesus. As much as it is possible and in accord with each one's ability, we are called to make Christ present in our world through our own lives and our interaction with others. Second, we are to respect ourselves and our bodies are to be cared for, since they are a gift from God. This is why it is so important to live healthy lives. I have mentioned on several

occasions the need to care for every aspect of our human existence. We need to feed and nourish our soul which is a kind of compass of spiritual well-being. If we take the time to retreat once in a while from a busy and noisy world, we have the opportunity to connect with our very essence - which is the "Kingdom Within" as Jesus spoke about so many times. No one is an island unto themselves, but rather, all of us, at one time or another, need "down time" in order to recharge our spirits. We need to take care of our emotional and psychological health. If we do not love ourselves, we cannot love others or, at best, this love that we claim to have will be distorted. We also have to be a whole lot better at forgiving ourselves when we have messed up. Even God is easier on us than we are on ourselves. All of us have to make the time to spend with friends and family, and it is also extremely important to reach out to the communities where we live. This helps in two ways: It gives us the satisfaction of knowing that our lives make a difference in the lives of others and in our world, and it helps to keep us grounded so that we can better appreciate our own life experience. We must take care of ourselves physically. Sometimes we forget we are human and not "super-human", and we wear ourselves down to the point of burn-out. We need to learn to eat healthier in a world that bombards us with the advantages of fast food. We need to learn that, while having a drink now and then socially is nice, excess leads to relationship breakdowns, and often financial ruin, and if we go as far as to hit bottom, it can even claim our life. Drugs, excess gambling, sexual promiscuity, smoking, etc. - all of these lead to a deterioration of not just our physical well-being, but often our psychological health, as well. We are the living Icons of Christ! We carry his love and compassion within us! We are to be the beacon of light that shines in our world! But how can that light shine if we choose darkness? If we choose to ignore the Divine within, we cannot be effective agents of God's love and compassion in a world that is hurting so much. Today's Gospel, as well, has much to teach us, and the story of Christ walking on the water is a wonderful story of faith. When Christ called him to walk on the water, Peter was doing just fine, but as soon as he looked around and chose fear over trust, he began to sink. You and I are no different than Peter. When we encounter those times in our lives when we take a leap of faith and then stand back and begin to allow fear or doubt to take over, we too, begin to sink, and our cry is the same as Peter's – "Lord, save me!" Remember how often I mention in my homilies about believing that God wants to share your life? I say that, if you really don't believe God wants to share

your life, or that if you prayed and weren't sure if God was listening, why waste your time? This is what happened to Peter. Jesus called him to come across the water and he did, but then he doubted his own ability, and faith gave way to fear. In the Gospels, Jesus has made it clear that, on our own, "nothing is possible" but "with God, all things are possible." There is no doubt how much God loves you! Clothing his own divinity with our humanity, he walked and lived among us as an ordinary man who, because of his faith, was able to do extraordinary things. Through his life, death and resurrection, he has robed humanity in His divinity – we share the same eternal life as Jesus - we are his brothers and sisters and being so, we are co-heirs of the Kingdom. Let us pray: Loving Jesus, give me the courage and the strength to revere my body in which You dwell. Help me to choose only those things that would assist me in drawing closer to You. Let me see myself as in a mirror and change those things that are contrary to the quality of life You would have me live. In times of doubt, give me faith that I, too, may "walk on water" with my eyes fixed on You. I guess St. Francis of Assisi sums it up best in his prayer: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring love; where is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair in life, let me bring hope; where there is darkness, light, and where there is sadness, joy. Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console others; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love others; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in forgiving others that we are BORN forgiven, and it is only in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.